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SUBJECT: SECRETARY GATES' OCTOBER 23 MEETING WITH SLOVAK DEPUTY  
PRIME MINISTER KALINAK AND DEFENSE MINISTER BASKA: INCREASED  
PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN, ACCEPTING A GUANTANAMO DETAINEE

BRATISLAVA 00000453 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Keith A. Eddins, Charge d'Affaires, a.i., State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: Secretary of Defense Gates met October 23 with Deputy Prime Minister (and Interior Minister) Kalinak and Defense Minister Baska on the margins of the Bratislava NATO defense ministerial. Kalinak underscored and elaborated on Baska's earlier announcement that Slovakia would be increasing its troop contribution in Afghanistan, said that he would also be sending Slovak police to participate in the EU training mission there, and offered Slovakia's Lest training facility to NATO for use in preparing troops and police for deployment to Afghanistan. Kalinak also expressed hope that a Slovak-developed human-presence detection sensor might prove useful in Afghanistan, and noted that Slovakia was now prepared to move forward with discussions aimed at accepting a Guantanamo detainee. Finally, he cited Slovak support for U.S. and NATO missile defense plans, and explained that Prime Minister Fico's October 22 public statement was based on Fico's incomplete understanding of what the new missile scheme actually entailed. The Secretary welcomed Kalinak's commitments and expressed appreciation for the Slovak's having hosted a successful ministerial. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (C) Slovak Deputy Prime Minister Robert Kalinak and Defense Minister Jaroslav Baska met with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates October 23. Kalinak opened the meeting by reiterating the Slovaks' decision to increase their troop presence in Afghanistan to 400, and also to lessen the caveats under which those troops operate. Kalinak regretted that Slovakia would not be able to send a Special Forces unit at this time; sending such combat forces would have to wait until after next year's parliamentary elections. In his capacity as Interior Minister, Kalinak also told Gates that he was sending Slovak police to participate in the EU police training operation Afghanistan. Without specifying numbers of police to be sent, he said that Slovakia had developed a cadre of experienced trainers from their work at the facility in Jordan that is training Iraqi policemen. Kalinak also said that Slovakia was offering NATO and the EU the use of their recently-modernized Lest training facility, which is set up for either military or police to train in an urban environment.

[13.](#) (C) Kalinak next raised the Slovak-developed Ralen human-presence detection system, an advanced sensor technology the U.S. is interested in acquiring. Kalinak emphasized that this sensor is capable of saving lives in Afghanistan now, and

underscored Slovakia's desire to cooperate with the U.S. in its further development and deployment. Kalinak then said the Slovaks were now prepared to move forward with accepting Guantanamo detainees. He noted that Foreign Minister Lajcak and Special Ambassador Fried had spoken October 22, and that the Slovaks were most interested in pursuing the 'Hungarian model,' which the Slovaks see as helping to ease the detainee's transition and increase the likelihood that the detainee will remain in Slovakia and not move on immediately to another European country.

¶4. (C) Finally, Kalinak asked Secretary Gates to forgive Prime Minister Fico's October 22 press conference comments in which Fico vehemently rejected the notion of his government ever accepting any components of the proposed new U.S./NATO missile defense system on Slovak territory. Kalinak explained that Fico had not fully understood the nature of the new U.S. proposals, and was referring to the previous plans for a radar site in the Czech Republic and placing Ground-Based Interceptors in Poland. Kalinak said that he, Baska, and Lajcak had subsequently reiterated to Fico the true nature and scope of President Obama's revised plans -- particular the U.S. desire to make it a NATO system that would better defend Europe -- and that Fico and the Slovak government could be considered fully supportive of the U.S. proposal. Baska said he would be making the same point in his subsequent press conference, clearly reiterating Slovak support for the new missile defense scheme.

¶5. (C) Secretary Gates concluded the meeting by expressing his appreciation for Slovakia's contributions in Afghanistan and its cooperation with the U.S. in NATO and bilaterally. He welcomed the Slovak decision to take a Guantanamo detainee and assured Kalinak and Baska that we understood Slovakia had endorsed the new missile defense plans.

BRATISLAVA 00000453 002.2 OF 002

¶6. (C) EMBASSY COMMENT: The Slovaks were quite anxious about any potential negative reaction to Fico's missile defense comments, which he had volunteered to the media without even having been asked. Before the meeting Kalinak had taken pains to assure the Charge that Fico had not fully understood what he was saying or the true nature of the new plan, and Foreign Minister Lajcak subsequently called to make the same point and express his relief that the bilateral meeting had gone so well. Most significant, however, was the Slovak statement that they are now ready to accept a Guantanamo detainee. While all the details remain to be worked out, they are obviously seeking to underscore their commitment to close ties with the U.S. and we should -- and will -- move quickly to finalize an agreement.  
END COMMENT.

¶7. (U) Assistant Secretary of Defense Vershbow has cleared this message.  
EDDINS